

Law on the Frontlines

Legal Reference for Public Libraries



Navigating the Law: Landlord - Tenant

TMSLL/CMCLLD/MdA2JC 2023 04 rev.

Introductions

The Frontlines Workgroup includes representatives from the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library, Conference of Maryland Court Library Directors, the Maryland Access to Justice Commission, and the Access to Justice Department of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Instructors for each course will vary but the information provided is based on the core curriculum of the ongoing Frontlines Project.

Today's instructors are...

Joan Bellistri

Anne Arundel
County Public Law
Library

Catherine McGuire

Thurgood Marshall
State Law Library

Vickie Yiannoulou

Prince George's
County Circuit
Court Law Library



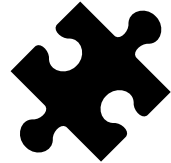
Pre-Assessment: What do you know?

- In which Maryland court are landlord-tenant cases generally heard?
- A small business owner renting space for their business is having trouble with the landlord. Would they look to Maryland's landlord-tenant law to help address the situation?
- When might someone use rent escrow?
- Can someone who is six months into a one-year lease leave if they find a better job in another state?
- Where might a tenant find law addressing the habitability or livability of their rental property?

Learning Outcomes



Describe the general topic of law



Identify best descriptive resources



Utilize primary sources of law for the topic



Assess and select among options for referral

Access to Justice

A quick review...

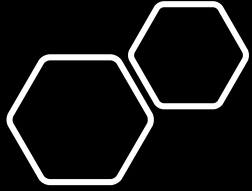


What is Landlord – Tenant Law?

Residential rental properties (apartments, houses)

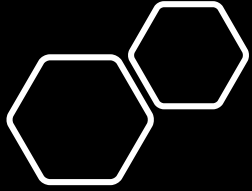
NOT:

- Ownership of real property
- HOA/COA
- Mobile homes
- Commercial property



Common Conflicts

- Rent disputes
- Maintenance disputes
- Entrance issues
- Nuisance concerns
- Ending a lease early
- Security deposits



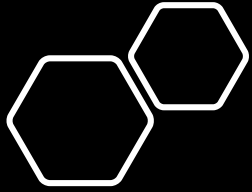
Details to Know

Maryland state law dictates lease language, particularly which provisions must be in the lease

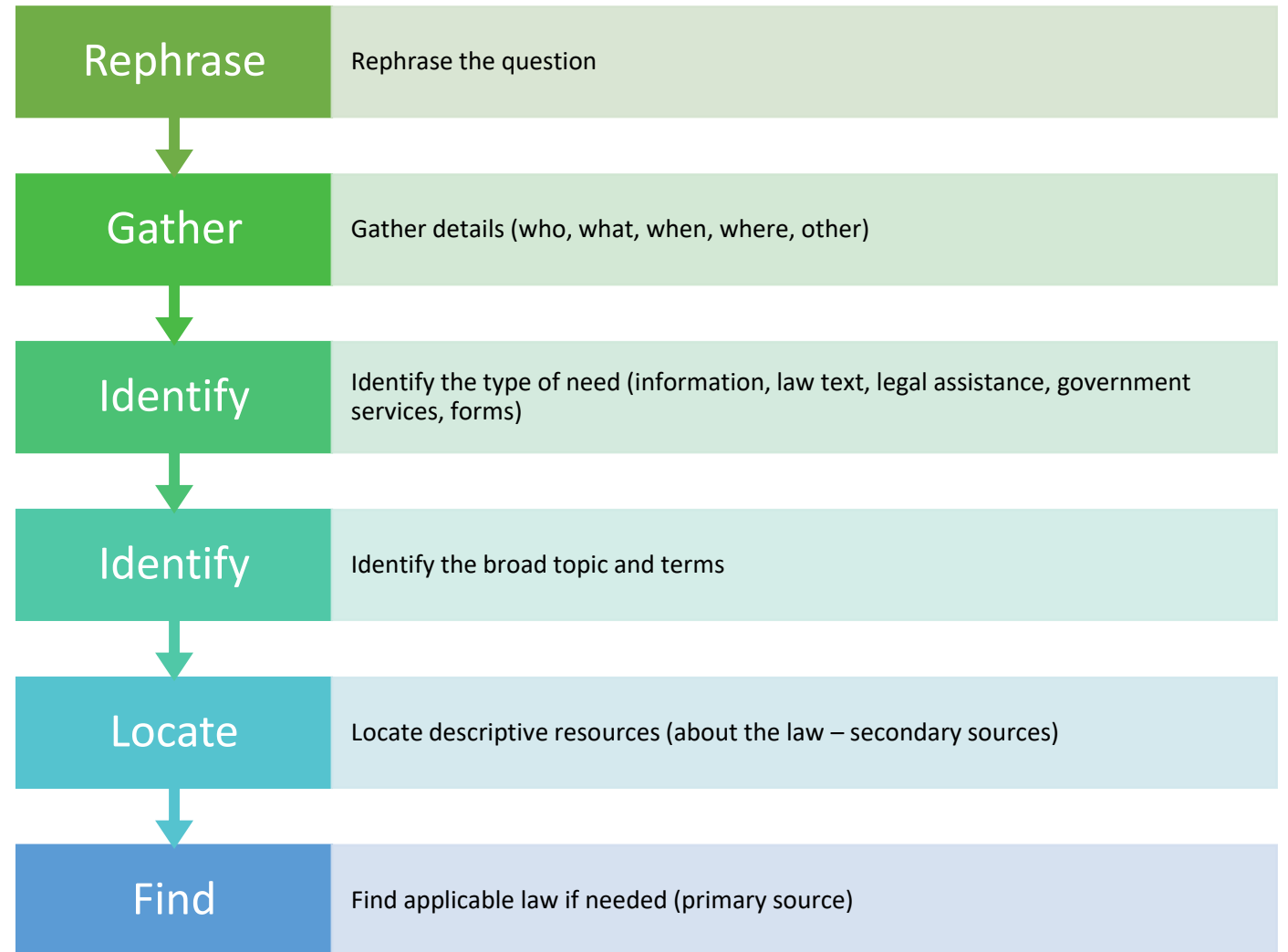
Maryland local law addresses specifics regarding livability and property conditions, among other details

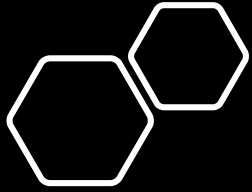
Federal law addresses areas such as low-income and public housing, as well as discrimination issues

Landlord-tenant cases are generally heard in the Md District Court in the county in which the property is located (Rent Court)



Best Practices Review





Descriptive Resources

Maryland People's Law Library

www.peoples-law.org

Maryland Courts

mdcourts.gov

Nolo (website and texts)

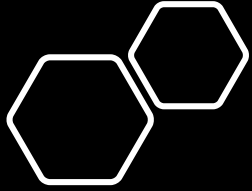
nolo.com

Demonstration: Descriptive Resources

Practice: Using Descriptive Resources

Choose one of the questions below. Then, using the resources just demonstrated (PLL, MdCourts, Nolo), see if you can locate resources to respond. Note which resource you used and if and where you found helpful information.

1. Find an article discussing security deposits. What is the maximum amount a landlord can charge?
2. If a tenant has not paid rent on time can the landlord evict the tenant immediately? Where did you find this information?
3. Are there limits to how much a landlord can raise the rent?



Law and Court Procedures

Maryland Code, Real Property Article,
Title 8 (landlord/tenant actions)

Maryland Rules, Title 3. Civil
Procedure – District Court

Local county or municipal code



LOOK LOCAL!

Demonstration: Primary Sources

Practice: Using Primary Sources

- In the Maryland Code, locate the section that addresses security deposits. What is the permitted maximum amount of a security deposit?
- In the Maryland Code, locate the Subtitle addressing access to legal representation in eviction cases. What is the income level for a "covered individual"?
- Does your local county code have a section on landlord-tenant?

Forms

- Maryland District Court Forms – mdcourts.gov/forms

Connect to Legal Assistance



LOOK LOCAL!



Court Help Centers – mdcourts.gov/selfhelp



Maryland Access to Counsel in Evictions – legalhelpmd.org



Fair Housing Action Center of MD – www.fairhousingmd.org



Md Volunteer Lawyer Services (MVLS) - mvlslaw.org/get-legal-help



Maryland Legal Aid – www.mdlab.org



Law Libraries – mdcourts.gov/ccli



PLL Legal Services Directory – www.peoples-law.org/directory



Economic Justice Program

Get help with landlord/tenant issues, medical debt collection defense, credit reporting problems, and debt collection violations.



Foreclosure Assistance

Facing a foreclosure filed against you in Maryland? Civil Justice can help!



Maryland Justice Passport

Get referrals to legal help, store documents and case information, and keep track of your next steps.



Lawyer Referral Service

Search the directory of Civil Justice member lawyers by county and practice area.

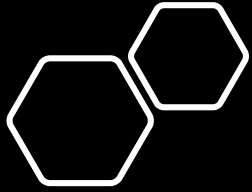


Coordinated Intake

Coordinated Intake for Access to Counsel in Evictions.

Practice: Finding Referrals

- Not including the specific referrals already discussed – can you identify an organization, either state or local, that may assist with landlord-tenant questions?



Self-Study

- [Guide to Maryland landlord-tenant law.](#) Fair Housing Action Center of Maryland (2020), available through State Law Library's catalog

Re-Assessment: What do you know?

- In which Maryland court are landlord-tenant cases generally heard?
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Questions?